1: Gorer
159

[For life histories of a number of Lep
pp. 217-220; 366-377; 384-413; 41

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[...]as, see category 116,
[...]429.]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

CHAPTER 6

Some Lepcha Personalities

159 IT is time now to introduce some Lingtem personalities; and it will be convenient to start with the Church. The details of these brief biographies were not in every case contributed by the individual concerned; for, as with us, some Lepchas prefer to tell of others rather than to talk about themselves. I always felt apologetic when asking for these personal details. How many of us, I wonder, would care to impart the more intimate details of our private lives to a stranger, and one of an alien culture at that? In actual fact, however, most Lepchas have no reticence about such matters, and are not in the least offended if one refers to their illegitimate children, or asks for the names of the women with whom they are on intimate terms.

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The senior Dorje-Lopön of Lingtem was a man of almost saintly appearance. Ascetic-looking and upright, you would have said that here was one who had long since cast off the cares of the flesh, but actually he could have given points to Casanova. When we first met him he was well over eighty years of age, but still spent most of the day helping in the fields. He first married when he was quite a young man, but tiring of his wife, by whom he had one son, he transferred his affections to a girl he liked better. He found the new wife so much to his liking, that, leaving his son in the care of the first, he forsook her and ran off to Darjeeling with the second. He came back one year later, and on his return his first wife's relatives attempted to bring about a reconciliation. This, 159 however, was unsuccessful, since the Dorje-Lopön had 586 completely tired of his first wife. All efforts having failed, she

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was married off to another man, but the Dorje-Lopön was made to refund the original marriage price. He was, however, given the custody of his son Datoop, now a man of fifty, and one of the leading lights in the Lingtem monastery. As a child Datoop lived sometimes with his father and sometimes with his mother, who had now married the headman of a nearby village. It seemed as though the Dorje-Lopön would now settle down to respectable married life; but in the course of his wanderings he one day discovered an attractive young girl in a neighbouring village. Chapshay was her name, and almost at once he deserted his wife and went to live at the home of his new friend's parents, only coming to Lingtem for the purpose of attending periodical ceremonies at the monastery. After a time Chapshay's parents tired of the situation and suggested that the Dorje-Lopön might at least regularise his position. To this he consented; and accordingly presented them with the necessary carcass of a pig. While he was still living with Chapshay he one day espied her niece, with whom he instantly fell in love. It was a mere matter of months for him to make Atyok pregnant; and when this occurred her parents forced him to do the ceremony known as *Tip-song*, in order that she should not give birth to a bastard. This was followed by marriage. For some time the three lived together at Chapshay's home, the Dorje-Lopön still coming to Lingtem from time to time. In those days, before the present building had been erected, the main door of the monastery faced towards the east. There was but one big prayer-drum, and it was housed in a separate little building known as the *Hla-gong*. Living in Lingtem at the time was one Jiroong, whose wife, a woman much older than he, was also an Inebu. She had already been married before going to live with Jiroong, but her former husband and all his near relations were dead. She was not attractive; but since Jiroong's parents were too poor to obtain a better wife for him he was forced to submit. Jiroong's wife was in charge of the *Hla-gong*, which meant that she was often about in the monastery; and in those days

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some of the Lamas were in the habit of spending occasional days fasting in the building. Amongst these was the Dorje-Lopön; and so it was that the two became acquainted. After a time they got to know each other better, and it seems that they were in the habit of telling their beads together in the *Hla-gong*. Ordinarily this conduct would have passed unnoticed; but in these particular circumstances it was most reprehensible in view of the fact that Jiroong had been the pupil of the Dorje-Lopön, who was thus his senior in rank. The Dorje-Lopön, however, had by now decided that life in Lingtem was too good a thing to be missed; and so it was that he decided not to return to his other two wives. Jiroong knew perfectly well what was going on; and while he did not care particularly for his wife, he could take no action, since to complain of his senior's conduct would have been an offence against ecclesiastic discipline. Things went on in this rather unsatisfactory manner for several months, when the Dorje-Lopön thought his position sufficiently stabilised for him to visit Jiroong's wife in her own home; but this was rather more than the village would stand. Attempts were now made to induce the Dorje-Lopön to return to his two former wives; but without success. All this happened about seventeen years ago, when the Dorje-Lopön must have been about sixty-five years old. A meeting was now called of all the local Lamas, headmen, and Youmis. They considered the case and decided that the Dorje-Lopön must go back to his former wives. This he flatly refused to do, and went so far as to say that they could kill him before he would consent to leave Lingtem. A compromise was therefore arrived at by which it was decided that the Dorje-Lopön should allow his two former wives to come and live with him in Lingtem, which they did. By this time his son by his first wife was already married and had four children of his own. Chapshay and Atyok, wives two and three, now came over to Lingtem and took up residence with Datoop, with whom the Dorje-Lopön, his father, was then living, having promised to see no more of Jiroong's wife. It looked as though the affair had been

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amicably settled, for nothing happened for the next five 159
weeks. It then transpired that the Dorje-Lopön and 837
Jiroong's wife had made a private arrangement to meet from time to time, and that they had not the slightest intention of putting an end to their affair. During this time, although the Dorje-Lopön was living in the same house as Chapshay and Atyok, it was noticed that he had no relations with them; and it was on this account that people became suspicious. Chapshay and Atyok put up with this state of affairs for a further three months and then departed to their own home. An official protest followed and this time a divorce was [536]
arranged, as a result of which the Dorje-Lopön was required to give one ox, one pig, one copper-pot and twenty rupees in cash as compensation. As he had no ready cash he borrowed [426]
the twenty rupees from the monastery funds; and has still not liquidated the debt. Having settled this affair he announced that he had done with women for the rest of his life, and that henceforth he would remain celibate. He went so far as to say that he would not marry Jiroong's wife even should the opportunity occur. Two months later Jiroong went down to the Mandal, told him that the Dorje-Lopön had again started meeting his wife, and asked what he should do. Another meeting was held; and as a result of its deliberations Datoop was ordered never to let his father out of the house by himself. The Dorje-Lopön, although head of the monastery, was told of this order and specifically warned that he must only visit the monastery for the purpose of attending public ceremonies, and that in no case was he ever to enter the *Hla-gong*. In spite of this the old man still contrived regularly to meet Jiroong's wife, as a result of which her husband decided to divorce her. For some time all three lived together in Jiroong's house, and in the meantime the Dorje-Lopön helped Jiroong in his fields.

Poor Jiroong deserved a better fate than has actually been 159
his lot. After a number of friendships here and there he grew 587
tired of an aimless existence and decided to marry again. There then came to the village the sister of Tempa. She was

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visiting her brother, who had left his home and settled in Lingtem. She was not too old, unmarried, and not uncomely. Jiroong started to visit her; and soon decided that she was the one girl who could change his life: she was. He worked hard in his fields; and before long had saved enough money to buy the necessary pig. Tempa was willing to let his sister go; and so the two were married. They now have two children of their own; but life is not all roses. Mrs. Jiroong, it appears, is fond of the bottle; and when she indulges displays an uncontrollable temper. Although he is now a senior Lama, Jiroong has to submit to the indignity of finding his wife debarred from entering the monastery. This he could bear; but unfortunately his wife cares nothing for monogamy. He could bear this too, if only she would entertain her friends in private.

When Jiroong married again the Dorje-Lopön and his latest wife decided to set up house on their own. She died a few years later and he now lives alone with his only other child, a boy of eighteen, whose mother was the fourth wife. Although still titular head of the monastery the old man finds it hard to make ends meet. He was rich at one time, but his money, and that of his son, has mostly gone in smoothing out his matrimonial tangles. At eighty-two he is looking for a sixth wife; but the girls in Lingtem, like the widow who married Tristram Shandy's Uncle Toby, are somewhat doubtful of his ability to please them.

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The second Dorje-Lopön is sixty-nine, and entered into matrimony for the first time only a year ago, when he married an elderly Mun, Pom-ri, on the death of her husband; but the pair had been lovers for forty years. The Dorje-Lopön always called himself a celibate; but this is what actually happened: While he was still a boy, his elder brother was married, but shortly after left for Gangtok, leaving his wife at home. The Dorje-Lopön would in any case have had the right to cohabit with her; but in this

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The second Dorje Lopön.

The senior Dorje Lopön.

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particular case his elder brother agreed to regard him in the light of a co-husband, which meant that the Dorje-Lopön and his elder brother's wife could live together quite openly. This state of affairs was almost exactly similar to the so-called Tibetan polyandry. It is not usual amongst Lepchas, and the Mandal told me that he had not heard of any other cases. After the return of the elder the two brothers lived with the one wife in perfect amity for years. The elder brother died some time ago, and it was only after his wife's death that the Dorje-Lopön actually married, since the original ceremony was performed only by his elder brother. There were no children by this marriage.

I often wondered why he decided to marry so late in life; but after we got to know him well he told us, with a twinkle in his eye, that for an old man marriage was preferable to promiscuity. Also, in his old age he liked to think that there was someone to care for him. He seemed to have a good knowledge of his books and generally officiated at the monastery services, since his senior does not nowadays often attend. He is the only man in Lingtem who has acquired the necessary knowledge to keep away hail, and for this reason his services are much in demand at certain times of the year. He has no property of his own, and lives in the house of Tafoor, the son of his younger brother.

* * * * *

Tafoor, whose rank is *Umzet*, is secretary and treasurer of Lingtem monastery. Inclined to be stout, he has few worldly cares and looks the typical jovial monk. His father, until the time of his death, was Mukhtiyar of the whole of Jongu district; as a result of which Tafoor and his brother have inherited not only a considerable number of fields, but also one of the best houses in the village, complete with its own private altar, images, and books. He is by far the best-educated man in Lingtem, and has a good knowledge of Tibetan sacred literature: also he speaks Nepali. Although a Lama he might have followed his father but for the fact,

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Tafoor.

Chôtembu.

[facing p. 85]

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already noted, that he is the only man in the district who knows how to keep away rain. As it is, he is the mainspring of the local Church, and is destined one day to be its head. He is at present thirty-five, and was married at seventeen to a girl five years his junior. Before becoming a Lama he studied for five years. In those days there were six other boys all learning with the same teacher, and they used to compete amongst themselves, and so learnt rapidly. His father, too, was a Lama and in his younger days spent some years at a monastery in Gangtok in order to receive higher instruction. While he was there, though already married, he fell in love with a girl who eventually became his second wife. On his return to Lingtem he told his wife what had happened; but she argued that since she had borne him two children it was unnecessary to bring another woman to the house. Tafoor's father, however, said he would love them both equally; and his wife therefore agreed to the second marriage. Although Tafoor's mother did not know it, the second wife had already given birth to a daughter while the pair were living together in Gangtok, and this child was later married to the son of the local artist. After the second wife had established herself in Lingtem she refused to allow Tafoor's father to have any further connection with his first wife, whereupon Tafoor's mother married a man named Dunbyo, with whom she still lives, Dunbyo giving Tafoor's father a pig as compensation.

Tafoor has four children, the eldest of whom, Chimpet, a boy of fourteen, is learning to be a Lama. He is rather sullen in appearance and spends most of his time catapulting birds, in the imitation of which he displays quite remarkable skill. His head is badly scarred, due to the fact that his mother, a rather ill-tempered woman, hit him with a burning brand when he was small. His father says he is quite intelligent but will not apply himself to his studies, which he started some six months ago. The second Dorje-Lopön, his grandfather's brother, is teaching him, and so he lives at home. Chimpet says he wants to grow up quickly, so that he can enjoy himself properly. He appears to be unusually young for his age, and has not yet reached the age of puberty.

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and has not yet reached the age of puberty. In spite of this, however, he is well aware of the facts of life, and a few years ago was seduced by his uncle's wife, a woman of thirty, with whom he is still on intimate terms.

Tafoor's second child is a girl, and although three years younger than Chimpet she looks much older. She already nurses the two younger children, and knows how to cook, and is perfectly capable, so her father tells me, of running the house. No arrangements have so far been made for her marriage, but Tafoor hopes to hear of a suitable partner during the course of the next few years.

* * * * *

Chodo is Tafoor's younger brother, and so far has only reached the rank of *Ka-Ne*. He was thirty this year and his wife, whom he married some ten years ago, is the same age. He told me that when he was about five or six he used to play at making little houses out of sticks and leaves; also he was fond of playing with swings, but his parents would not let him do this in summer-time because, so they said, the demons would mistake him for fruit.* As a child he was frightened of devils and did not like walking about alone at night; and even now he does not like going by himself in the forest after dark. When he is alone and feels frightened he prays all the time to Guru Rimpoche to keep him safe. He never carries a charm "like ignorant people," because if he did this Guru Rimpoche would think he had no faith in his prayers and would therefore do nothing to help him. He knows that his wife has relations with Chimpet but does not mind in the least: "unless one learns, how can one ever be proficient?" He did the same thing himself as a boy; and even now frequently goes to the forest with Tafoor's wife, with whom he is of course legally entitled to cohabit. As a child he was sent to school at Mangen but only read the first three books. After this he spent a year in the Maharaja's palace in

* Fruit, as it swings in the breeze, is thought to be plucked by passing devils. Cf. *The Golden Bough*.

[i.e., Chimpet, the son of Tafoor, an Umzet. - Analyst]

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159 Gangtok, where he was employed as a scullion. He was at this time already a Lama, and after a year ran away, because he "could not bear to commit the sin of killing chickens for the Maharaja's table." While he was in 868 Gangtok he learnt a certain amount about European cooking, for which he appears to have had some aptitude. His brother told me that when he first came back to Lingtem he complained perpetually about the dirtiness of the cooking pots at home, and used to spend all his time polishing them. 515 This was only a passing phase, however; for now, added Tafoor, "he is just as dirty as any other normal person!"

159 Chodu has one daughter and two small sons; the elder of 842 these is only four, but already wears his yellow sash. Once, when the wives of Tafoor and Chodu were both pregnant, it was apparent that Tafoor's wife would give birth to a son and Chodu's to a daughter, since the former's child was high up in the womb. Tafoor, however, wished for a girl and Chodu wanted a boy. They talked to their wives; and found them willing for the sexes to be changed. All that was necessary was that the two women should exchange presents. This they did; and in due course each gave birth to a child of the sex desired. Chodu says that this change of sex in any unborn child can always be effected up to the fifth or sixth month: after that its sex is definitely settled and cannot be altered. When the sex of a child has been changed in this 828 way it is always liable to indulge in the pursuits of the opposite sex until it reaches the age of puberty; and this is held to be the cause of effeminate boys and masculine girls. Tafoor's eldest daughter should have been born a boy. Although she 857 is good to the other children and likes looking after the house, she is also fond of climbing trees, making bows and arrows (a most unwomanly occupation), and catapulting birds. While she was still in the womb a Lama, a man who did not like Tafoor, came to the house one day and, unknown to the latter, changed the tassel on his rosary. For this reason, the child, although really a male, was born a girl. The sex of an unborn child can only be once changed: and once

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the change has been effected nothing can be done to alter it back.

Chodu, more than any other Lepcha I have ever met, conformed in appearance with the popular conception of these people as "Elves of the forest"; but actually his gnome-like appearance was somewhat deceptive. He was so pre-occupied with sex, more even than the average Lepcha, that we had already christened him "the dirty Reverend" before we knew his proper name; and under this title he appears in all my notes. When he found that we were fond of flowers he used often to bring in great armfuls of purple *Dendrobium* orchids, flowers that in England would have cost at least a shilling for a single bloom; and on these occasions our otherwise severely simple living-room would assume the appearance of a popular actress's dressing-room. His duties as a Ka-Ne brought him almost daily to the monastery, when he would come tiptoeing into the bedroom to change the water on the altar. A very likeable person and full of fun.

* * * * *

The *Chötembu*, who was otherwise known as Lumbar, was fifty-two. Grey-haired and jolly, his rather peculiar goitre gave the impression of a roll of fat all round his neck. His origin was somewhat obscure, for he appears to have been what our interpreter described as the "blasted son" of a Tibetan. He can neither read nor write, and says he has never exercised his prerogative to beat his fellows. His first wife, now forty-seven, is a daughter of Pom-Ri, now the wife of the second Dorje Lopön. After ten years of married life his wife, since she had borne him no child, urged him to marry again; this he did, and although his second wife has given him two children he still remains faithful to the first. The two women live in separate houses, but there is no question of their not getting on together. The first lives alone in a cattle-shed because she likes to get away by herself at times, and finds it irksome to be always in a house full of people and noise. Chötembu divides his time between the

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two, but, so his son says, spends most of his nights with the senior.

Mrs. Chötembu number one, like her mother, is a Mun, but is mainly in request as a singer of songs, of which she has an immense repertoire. I once came across the family working in the fields and asked her to give us a tune. I think she misunderstood my meaning; for it was only when I told her that I was really a *Ge-lug-pa*, or celibate monk, that she finally left me alone: but it took some months to convince her. I should add, however, that her advances were always made in public and caused much amusement to the rest of the family.

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Datoop is the elder son of the senior Dorje Lopön. Until relieved by Lumbar he acted as Chötembu for over three years, and is now awaiting advancement to the rank of Umzet. As a boy he spent some years in Gangtok, where he was trained as a carpenter, at which trade he is still employed. He superintends most local building, and with the assistance of the *Hlaribu*, or artist, made most of the woodwork in the Lingtem monastery. He was married at nineteen to a girl seven years his junior, but the pair did not live together until after his return from Gangtok, some five years later. He becomes almost heated when discussing his father's affairs, but thinks it unlikely that he will marry again, since "he is now too old for that sort of thing." He says he would rather live in some place like Gangtok, "where there are people to see and gossip to hear; bazaars to walk in and all sorts of things to buy; but what can one do? Town life is easy, since one does not work in the fields: but without work in the fields money is not forthcoming, so it is better to stay at home." Datoop thinks it good to die rich, since then one's children can do the death ceremony in a proper manner. It would be nice to live to eighty, as up to that age most men can still work in the fields: but to live on till a hundred is definitely staying too long. One does not want to be a burden to others.

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Pemba is Datoop's eldest son and is now twenty-seven, his wife being four years younger. He had already started his Lama's training when he was summoned to work in Gangtok. He remained at the palace for nearly ten years, when he left the Maharaja's service at his own request. Like his friend Chodu, he too was a scullion. When he was in Gangtok he learnt to wear boots and as a result still has very tender feet. His mother says that he was not weaned early; and perhaps because of this he was a very nervous child. We often noticed that he flinched at any sudden noise, and even now he says he cannot bear the sight of blood. He used to cry a lot when he first left home, but after his return on leave he soon found that he wanted to go back to Gangtok again. His parents told me they were very anxious while he was away from home and always used to visit him once a year. He was sometimes beaten as a child and would threaten to throw himself in the fire; but his parents would only laugh, and told him that if he really wished to die they would not prevent him. Although he still is rather nervous, and much more retiring than the average Lepcha, he does not appear to be in any way maladjusted. He is completely bilingual, speaking Nepali almost as well as his own language.

Pichi, aged twenty-three, is Datoop's second son. He has just returned from Gangtok, where he has spent the last eight years or so learning to be a carpenter. While he was still away from home his parents decided that it was time for him to be betrothed; but he sent back word that he was too busy to leave his work. For this reason his brother, a boy of fifteen, acted as his proxy at the ceremony. When Pichi came home the following year he at once made it clear that he had no intention of proceeding with this prearranged marriage, and said that when he wished to marry he would choose a wife for himself. The Mandal, who made all the arrangements, was somewhat perplexed at this state of affairs, such a case never having arisen before. He now thinks that in order not to cause offence the best thing is

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159 585 588 for the girl to marry both brothers. If this is done only Pichi will be required to carry out the ceremony; and having done this he can hand the girl over to his younger brother. There would be no objection to him marrying what would theoretically be a second wife, should he later wish to do so. 159 837 In the meantime Pichi gets all the amusement he wants with his elder brother's wife. This he told me late one night when he was somewhat the worse for wear. In addition to his own 197 language, he also speaks Sikkim Tibetan and is the only man in the village who can read and write Nepali. Because of this all official correspondence comes to him for translation. He has not yet fully readjusted himself to the simplicity of village life, but, even so, already thinks he would rather live at home.

582 Datoop's wife is one of the most outstanding characters in Lingtem. She was married at twelve but did not live with her husband until after his return from Gangtok. Unlike most other women, she is often to be seen in charge 462 of work and her orders are instantly obeyed. She has the reputation of giving good food at her house, but, according to Tafoor, would be a better cook if she took a little less to drink. She has a pleasing open face. but her appearance is somewhat spoilt by a missing canine tooth. She came originally from a village beyond Mangen, and still visits her old home occasionally, where her brothers are still living. 301 423 She has better jewellery than any other women in the village; this she bought with the proceeds of her private fields. In her opinion women have a hard time, and no private life at all. She thinks, however, that grown-up girls 581 are glad to get away from home and that marriage is the best state for them. Like her husband she, too, is a Lama and holds the rank of Chötembu; and as such has the power to beat up people in the monastery. I asked her what sort 684 of offences would merit her interference and she replied, without the slightest hesitation, "having sexual intercourse inside the building, or within its grounds." She added that it would be considered slightly shameful for a woman, although an Inebu, to beat a man; but nobody really minds.

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As a matter of fact, Datoop's wife has never exercised her 159
powers. Although she is such a commanding personality, everybody likes her; and we often heard of her going out of the way to lend a helping hand to others.

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The Inebu Dorje Lopön is a widow of sixty-two and lives alone with her adopted son, having had no children of her own. Although the official leader of the women, she can [212
neither read nor write, and has turned up to-day, the 10th 597]
of April, in ignorance of the fact that no ceremony will take place for another two days. Her husband, who died many years ago, was a layman. After they had been married for 159
some years she persuaded him to take her niece as a second 595
wife. This he did; but she too was childless. The Dorje Lopön liked having a co-wife, because it made her housework very much lighter. The husband used to spend alternate nights with his two wives, but this was never a cause of quarrels. She thinks that for women the period immediately after marriage is the happiest time of life. Both men and women begin to get old at sixty; but even so, if she had a husband she would still enjoy sleeping with him. She did not actually remain faithful to her husband's memory; but has now ceased to be interested in the cares of the flesh. Her 159
adopted son is the child of her elder brother. This boy, who [584]
was betrothed a few months ago, and will be married next year, is at present living at the home of his future bride. The Mandal arranged the match, and since the Dorje Lopön has very little money of her own friends have subscribed towards the marriage expenses; but the boy's own father has paid a considerable part. Suspended from her necklace she always wore the broken head of a small china stag, of the type one can buy in the street for a penny. She [789]
had acquired this beast many years ago, and when it broke had kept its head, which she regarded as some sort of miraculous charm. We never saw her without it.

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159 Pargeut's mother is the Umzet of the Inebus. A shrivelled-
[104] up old woman, she was chiefly remarkable for a huge pendulous goitre, which flapped from her neck like a half-deflated bladder. She seldom attended the services, but used occasionally to bring her granddaughter, whom we were
[753] treating for boils. These she said were caused by a demon which was sitting on top of one of the marriage gifts when it was brought to the house. Although many ceremonies had been performed the boils remained, and even increased in number, and the aged Inebu could never understand why they started to disappear as soon as Geoffrey commenced to treat them. I remember once, shortly before we left, being suddenly awakened at dawn by the wailing of conch-shells, sounded from the terrace outside. It was a pouring
[763] wet morning; but she had clambered sorrowfully up through the dripping forest to have the death of her youngest granddaughter, a baby of two, announced to the village. I never saw her again.

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Old Hlatam, the mother of Aga, has never advanced beyond the lowest rank of Inebu. But she was a regular
[788] attendant at the monastery and an inveterate turner of prayer-wheels, being seldom seen without one in her hand.
159 She has the reputation of being a poisoner; but it had never
754 occurred to the others that this was a somewhat strange occupation for a female religious. She is believed to have caused the death of six people up to date, as a result of which she is much feared by most of the villagers, who take care not to eat or drink at her hands. It is thought that she keeps the poison in a small copper box, and that she obtained it from the plains. Incidentally, when the people
[33] here talk of the plains they generally mean Darjeeling, which, although 6000 feet above the sea, and exceedingly hilly, compared with Lingtem might almost be regarded as level. It is said that owners of poison must abstain permanently from meat and alcohol; so be warned, reader,

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next time you find yourself dining with a vegetarian teetotaller! When anyone inherits poison it cannot be thrown away or its special guardian, the demon Sung-Mu-Panden-Hla-Mo, would revenge itself on the person who did this. Also if the holder of poison can find no use for it within a reasonable time it should be used to kill off one's own relations: to this there is no moral objection. Karma Karbari, who gave me this information, believes that his wife was poisoned by Hlatam, for once she drank *chi* at her house; and died three months later. She commenced by spitting blood. This passed and was followed by dysentery: hæmorrhages followed, and finally her teeth turned black and cracked. This was soon followed by death. Once a very old and learned Lama came to the village on pilgrimage, and on seeing Hlatam he at once told her to get away from him, as he could see that she was evil. Hlatam does not kill people deliberately; but because she owns poison she cannot help herself, and is in the power of its demon. Before she dies she will hand it over to her son, when he too will then be forced to use it. At one time people were so afraid of this old woman that she was driven out of the village by Tafoor's father, when he was Mukhtiyar of the district. It was believed that she always carried the poison on her person, and for this reason he followed her to the fields and completely stripped her; but he did not find anything. It was shortly after this that she decided to join the Church. Tafoor says that he does not entirely believe the story, but, all the same, if he is ever called to Hlatam's house he will certainly hold her responsible for any subsequent illness, and will take his revenge accordingly. The Mandal, too, confirms the story and says that he was present when Tafoor's father searched her. He does not, however, believe that she really does own poison, and thinks it wrong that the poor old woman should be so maligned.

* * * * *

While we were talking of Hlatam, Karma suddenly

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159 753 [782] complained of pains in the heart and said that they were caused by a demon known as Shuk-Sor Mung. When this Mung attacks animals they always die; but in the case of human beings their evil can be averted by the sacrifice of two chickens, one white and one speckled, together with the usual offerings of grain. Heart trouble seems in some way to be connected with poison. This is the story Karma gave me:

173 683 About sixty years ago there were two brothers living in the district named Tuk-Shyok and Sun-Kyon. They were supernaturals, and were in the habit of killing people by means of poison. Nobody would ever visit them; nor were they allowed to attend any of the local ceremonies. It was believed that they had caused the death of a number of people, and for this reason a meeting was called at which it was decided to kill them. Their mother, whose name was Na-Sor, was a Mun; and as such had special powers. It was decided to lock the door upon the two brothers after they had gone to sleep one night and then set fire to the house. At the time this happened their mother was not living with them, but occupied a lone hut a short distance away. She, however, saw the house burning and ra[illegible] to see what was happening. She first jumped on the fire, and being a Mun was able to use her powers instantly to put it out. As soon as she had time to look around she found that her two sons were at the point of death: each with a vessel of poison clasped to his breast. Their life had almost ebbed away; their hearts were just beating and no more. The elder could barely speak; but he was able to summon up sufficient strength to tell his mother what had happened, after which he fell back gasping and died. The younger brother lingered on for three more days. As he lay dying he said to the Mun: "Mother! In our time we have poisoned many people; but, now we too must die. But you will still live on; and you are a Mun; you have powers denied to many."

Na-Sor understood what was expected of her, and after the second son's death she remained alone in meditation for

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173 three whole nights. Higher up the valley there is a place
683 called Shuk, the home of many Mungs. From this place the mother called up the demon whose name was Sor; and told him in future to trouble all people. This was the revenge she took for the death of her only two sons.

787 If a person dreams that he sees a kite flying through the sky it is a clear indication that trouble is coming from Sor Mung. Karma says that the night before last his mother-in-law dreamt that she saw such a bird, which came and perched on the roof of the house. It was, therefore, not surprising that yesterday she complained of pains in her heart.

159 Karma is obsessed with poison, and would nearly always, sooner or later, bring the subject into the conversation. He has been Karbari for nearly three years and will soon hand over to another. His earliest memories are of having to do hard work. When he was about three years old his father's brother was being married. He remembers his mother being
[252] seated near the fire, preparing parched rice, and his father sitting a little way off, drying it. At that time Karma's father was unwell and could not attend the wedding; but he told his wife to go, and particularly asked her to bring him back a piece of liver, for which he had a fancy. On the evening of the wedding his mother went to the house where it was being held and remained there for some time, drinking and taking part in the feast. Karma remained at home. As his father was feeling unwell they had no food that night and went to lie down early. The house was very small and had but one room. Karma lay down on his father's left and his elder brother was on the right. After some time the father started to gasp for breath. Karma wondered what was the matter, and scrambling up, he looked into his father's face and asked him what had happened; but he did not reply. His brother was still sound asleep and so he shook him. He now noticed that his father's eyes were wide open and had a fixed staring expression.

The two boys did not know what to do: all the neighbours had gone down to the wedding, except one old woman who

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●159 lived nearby. She it was who had tried to prevent Karma's mother from going out that night, telling her that she ought not to leave her husband at such a time. The two boys, seeing the state their father was in, now started to cry; and when the old woman heard them she ran over to see what had happened. She asked their father what was the matter. He tried to speak, but was unable to make any sound. The old woman now went outside, to a place where there was a small prayer-wall. From here she shouted down to Karma's mother, who was in a house just below. At first she did not hear, and it was only after the old woman had called three or four times that she made any reply. She came hurrying up, wondering what was the matter, and bringing with her the promised liver. She rushed to her husband and threw herself upon him. As soon as she realised that he was dead she burst into tears; and as she cried she walked anxiously about the room clutching at things as she passed to and fro. In the meantime the old woman blew up the fire and piled more wood upon it. The two brothers still did not realise what had happened, and thought their father was asleep.

159 When Karma tried to approach him the old woman pulled
763 him away: "What are you doing?" she said, "your father is here no more." At the same time she tried to console the widow and told her not to cry. Shortly after this Karma's uncle came up to the house; and as soon as he arrived he went to the body and bent its legs. This is always done to a corpse; but at the time Karma wondered what was happening. The three adults now consulted together; and decided to go quietly and call a certain Tashi, a Lama who was helping to perform the marriage ceremony. Tashi came and sat at the feet of the body, which was placed with its head turned away from him. Karma and his brother still did not realise what had happened and started to laugh and play, whereupon the Lama reproved them. Karma remembers Tashi making a queer sort of whining noise while he spoke to the corpse. He did this three times; but neither he nor his brother was frightened and went on playing all the time.

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After the Lama had gone away the uncle put the corpse into a basket. When Karma saw this he cried out and asked what had happened to his father. He tried to get into the basket with him, but his mother pulled him away: "It is no longer your father," she said, "he has now turned into a Mung."

The following morning Karma's uncle again came to the house, and took up some of the floor-boards. Many people now gathered at the house. One man took a burning fire-brand and got down through the hole which had been made in the floor. His uncle followed and others dragged the basket containing the corpse towards the hole. It was lowered to the ground and then the uncle hoisted it on to his shoulders and carried it away. Other people followed, some carrying the deceased's bow and arrows, and also his bamboo arrow-holder. Now they all moved off, one man walking in front with the lighted brand. Later on the party returned to the house and Karma wondered why his father was no longer with them. When they were approaching a big fire was lighted on the path outside, over which they all passed. Then a knife was brought and placed upon the door-step by Karma's uncle. Everybody stepped over this before entering the house. Later on they all went away and the house was very quiet. Karma wondered why his mother cried so much.

Karma's parents were always very poor; they did not own even a single goat or cow. He remembers his uncle once bringing a goat to the house, but cannot remember it being slaughtered. It was very good to see the meat, and he hoped he would be given some to eat. But his mother told him not to touch it, and this made him feel very angry. After her husband's death, Karma's mother gave birth to two more children. One was born three months later; but the other was a bastard. Its father was a man named Takor; but he denied paternity and refused to accept any responsibility in the matter. He behaved in the same way with another woman, by whom also he had a child. Some months after his father's death Karma was playing outside the house when a

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159 strange woman came to see his mother. She was carrying
[415] some water in a long bamboo, which she put down against
the fence. She talked a lot to Karma's mother and asked her
[597] if she could adopt him. At first she would not agree; but later
on she said that he could go provided he went of his own free
will. The strange woman then called him aside: "I will take
you home with me;" she said, "at my home we have lots of
rice and meat; and if you come and live with me I will give
them to you. Come, let us go! After you have eaten you can
then come back to your mother." Karma did not like the
idea of leaving home, but the thought of food was more than
he could resist. He went away with his adopting mother; but
when they reached home she gave him only a plate of rice;
and no meat. He now discovered that he was to live with this
new strange woman; and when he told her that he wanted to
go back to his mother she tried to frighten him by saying that
if he did so he would certainly meet Sangrong Mung, which
would eat him up.

[157] Now he grew bigger and bigger. Once he dreamt that he
86 was urinating; he was doing it in a special way, only a very
159 little at a time. In the morning when he awoke he found that
his bed was wet; even his legs were damp. His adopting
mother threw the wet sheet at his head and also beat him;
then she rubbed his body with the dirty wet cloth.

In the day-time his adopting parents generally went to work in the fields and he was left alone in the house. Sometimes he would steal the eggs. He never ate them, but used to break them and then fry them on hot stones. One day his parents found the mess and beat him. Whenever he thought he had done anything which would bring him a beating he would run away and hide in the forest and not return before nightfall. Often he was afraid to enter the house and would spend the whole night lying in the filth beneath it. But his parents soon got to know about this; and whenever they found anything wrong, without saying anything about it, they would come and beat him straight away. One day he was playing beside his adopting father, who was sitting on

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the ground shredding a bamboo. He playfully kicked the ball of twine which his father had just been making. This made him very angry and he threw his knife at him; the scar of this he has to this day. He never loved his adopting parents. They used to beat him a lot on the back, and this always made him belch. Whenever he stole they tied his hands together with brushwood and held them over the fire. Although this never injured them it frightened him very much, and he decided to give up stealing.

Karma was now very unhappy. Although his adopting parents were rich they gave him only a second-hand knife and some old and worn-out clothes. His mother, who was still very poor, had married again, and from time to time he used to go and see her. Whenever he did this he used always to take a little food, which he had saved out of the little that was given him. When he was about sixteen he decided to return to his own home. His mother asked him why he had come and told him to go back; but his stepfather remained silent. At that time Karma's two brothers and his eldest sister, who was already married, were living at home with their mother. While he was still feeling rather unsettled his elder brother said to him: "Why not stay at home and let us work the fields together; after all are we not real brothers?" Karma was fond of his elder brother, but did not care very much for his mother; but he decided to stay and help them work in the fields. After he had been at home about a month two men came from his adopting father's village. He was husking rice at the time. The two men came straight up to him and told him he must return with them; but this he refused to do. They then told him that his adopting father had bought a grindstone in a nearby village and that he wanted him to carry it home. A few days later he and his brother did take the grindstone over; but in order not to be seen they left it in an out-house and stole quietly away. Some weeks after this Karma's adopting father, whose name was Pashu, himself arrived. He had come over to attend a ceremony which the second Dorje-Lopön was performing

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159 for the purpose of keeping hail away while the harvest was being reaped. Pashu asked Karma why he had run away: "I never did anything wrong to you," he said, "so when I return you had better come with me." This Karma refused to do. "Although I am your adopted son," he said, "you did only evil to me": but Pashu refused to acknowledge the truth of this. Once, in a fit of anger, he had told Karma to return to his own home, and he now reminded him of this. The Dorje-Lopön was also present at this time and advised Karma to stay where he was. Whenever he had previously run away, as he did on several occasions, his mother had always beaten him and sent him back: but he was then quite small. This time his mother merely said: "Go back, if you wish, or stay here. You are big enough now to decide for yourself, and it makes no difference to me." Karma's step-
593 father was pleased at his decision, as he was himself finding life none too easy. His wife was devoted to her youngest son, but she did not care overmuch either for Karma or his elder brother, and was long since tired of her husband. Karma, however, always liked his stepfather, and was glad to stay at home and help him.

837 After he had been living at home for about a year his elder brother fell in love with his paternal uncle's wife, and used often to go with her to the forest. The man's brother knew of this and scolded him for allowing such a state of affairs to continue, as a result of which the two brothers quarrelled. Before the younger of the two uncles was married he was in the habit of sleeping occasionally with his elder brother's wife. From the Lepcha point of view there was nothing wrong in this; but the elder decided that it was time to arrange his younger brother's marriage. The girl selected did not care for her husband and spent most of her time with Karma's
762 elder brother. When her husband found out what was happening he took it very much to heart and shortly afterwards poisoned himself. Karma's brother was held re-
852 sponsible for the tragedy, and told that the least he could do was to pay for the necessary death ceremonies. To this he

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replied that since the woman had herself come and implored him to sleep with her he did not feel in any way responsible. A village meeting was now held and the brother attended to give his own version of the story. He was, however, held to be the guilty party and ordered to pay for the ceremonies. When he went to the meeting he took with him one pig, a load of millet for making *chi*, and a large quantity of grain. These he intended to give as a peace offering. "It is true," he said, "that this girl and I have lived together": but more than this he would not say. The same evening, when they were all sitting quietly at home, Karma saw his brother climb up the ladder into the attic store-room, where the poison used for hunting was kept. He stayed there some minutes and Karma heard him mumbling to himself about being found guilty, and saying that he could not possibly raise the means to pay. He tottered down the steps and into the yard, walked three steps forward and back again, and then made as if to fall. He appeared to be beside himself with rage, and was holding his unsheathed knife in his hand and shouting out that he would kill anyone who came near. His mother now rushed out and took him by the right hand and Karma clasped his left. With difficulty they threw him to the ground, for he had now become violent. Karma tried to force his brother's mouth open. He could see that his tongue was black and swollen, and his hands were tightly clenched. These, he knew, were the signs of poison. He shouted to his younger brother to run at once and bring some wild raspberry roots, also some chickens' excreta, this being a well-known emetic. He quickly ground the two together and forced the mixture down his brother's throat. By this time, however, his body had started to stiffen and he died a few minutes later.

After he had been living at home for some time Karma fell in love with a woman fourteen years his senior, the sister of a man named Gongyop. He had known this girl for some time, but had always considered himself too poor to marry. Since she, however, was not at all anxious to leave her brother's

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159 comfortable home, a compromise was arranged by which
59 Karma went to live with her, working in Gongyop's fields in order to earn the bride price. Soon after this he became very ill. At the time the family was living in temporary huts in the fields. It was a busy time of the year, and this did away with the long walk to and from the house. His wife was working
159 in the fields with her son by a previous husband, and Karma lay on his back in the hut watching them. Suddenly he felt queer; he thought he saw many people coming towards him, and he could hardly breathe. He called to his wife, but she took no notice and still went on with her work. Shortly after this he thought he saw the Hlaribu coming into the hut. He asked him where he was going. He said he had heard that Karma had recently bought a turquoise earring from Jiroong and asked if he might see it. This was true, and the earring was hanging on the wall above his head at the time.
[301 Karma told the Hlaribu that he had paid four rupees for it,
435] which the latter said was a reasonable price. All this time he was pouring with sweat. He saw many people peering at him from outside the house; some of them had huge goitres and each looked as though he was perched on the back of the person behind. He heard them laughing and talking and distinctly remembers one man saying: "Look at Karma! he has turned from a needle into a bodkin!" Karma again called out to his wife. He felt that the roof of the house was gradually contracting and coming slowly down, as though to crush him. He made no attempt to get to the door, and while he was doing this his wife and her son came into the house. They thought that he was dead, as he was lying stretched out on the floor and was motionless. His wife ran off to call a friend, who came at once and lighted incense. Later on some men came and carried him up to Gongyop's house, where he eventually recovered. The only other serious illness he has ever had was when he was ten years old, and this lasted for more than three months. His mother, who was a Mun, divined
[787] the cause of the trouble and saw that he could only recover by becoming a Padim, a sort of Mun with limited powers.

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Karma and his wife continued to live with Gongyop for several more years; but on the death of the former's step-father they went to live with his mother. His wife died in 1932, and his mother the following year. He soon married again, and his second wife bore him two children, the first of which died shortly after birth. Six months after the birth of the second child his wife died; and it is her mother who at present keeps house for him. Last year he was again betrothed and hopes to be married next year. In the meantime his future bride already has a baby seven months old. Karma believes in "Bloomsbury" morals; for he lived with his first wife for six years before he troubled to marry her; and when he finally decided to regularise his position he even went to the trouble of carrying out all the preliminary formalities, including a formal betrothal. He never thought it necessary to be faithful to any of his wives, and believes he is the father of at least two bastards. Of all our informants he was the most forthcoming and particularly enjoyed talking about himself. He was much more arrogant than the average Lepcha, and would probably have fitted better into a somewhat more forceful society. Had the army been open to him as a profession he would quickly have become a non-commissioned officer; for above all things he liked to order others about. For this reason he enjoys his post of Karbari, and I imagine will be far less happy when he has to obey orders rather than give them himself. The others think he is proud and a boaster, but say that he always speaks the truth. He is the type that in an European culture would be found standing at the street corner, hands in pockets, with a cigarette drooping from his lips. He would quickly degenerate if he ever lived in a town, and might easily take to a life of crime. I never liked him very much, but of all the Lingtem people he was easily the most useful.

* * * * *

The Hlaribu does not live in Lingtem; but since he is an active member of the local monastery and appears in many

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of the other stories, I have decided to include him: also he is the only artist in the district. Sixty-six years of age, he was bow-legged and almost a dwarf, and had a deep incised scar running the length of his forehead. He had come by this in the days of his youth, having fallen down one night on his way home from a party. He looked like a benevolent gnome. The word Hlaribu, which is Tibetan, really means a "maker of gods, or images," but is in general use for all people who are engaged in any sort of artistic work, from wood-carving to painting pictures on cloth. When the Hlaribu was about fourteen he was helping to repair the Talung monastery. At that time he was still learning to become a Lama; and when his teacher saw his work he advised him to become an artist. Shortly after this he went to the big monastery at Phensang, which is famous in Sikkim for the artistic work of its monks. He stayed there for nine years. When he set off he took with him a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf, and one rupee; these he laid at the feet of his teacher. On finishing his course he gave him twenty rupees, a pig, and a big copper vessel. The Hlaribu does not believe there is such a thing as individual skill in painting. He says that having completed the course he was as good as, and neither better nor worse than anyone else. Before he had any lessons he used to amuse himself by drawing birds and men on odd scraps of paper. He has now no preference with regard to the subjects he paints and only works to order, never for his own pleasure or amusement; he has not even troubled to decorate his own house.

When he first started to learn he was made to draw on a wooden board, which was covered with a thick layer of earth, oiled and powdered. The actual drawing was done with a wooden stylo, and being only for practice, was erased as soon as finished. He was first made to copy the heads of gods. After five or six days he became proficient at this, and was then made to copy cross-legged figures of naked gods. This took a further ten days. The next stage was to draw clothed figures, which, owing to their drapery, he found much more

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On the left the oldest man in Lingtem, who claims to be over ninety, with Chōtembu's wife.

[778]

The *Hlaribu*, or local artist-Lama. The objects on the left are small revolving prayer-drums.

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The method of drinking *chi*. The special hat which the man is wearing is made of plaited bamboo, and is only worn when hunting. It is not often seen nowadays.

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Chala Mandal, the Head-man of Lingtem.

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Lepcha in national dress.

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difficult. Now came the figure of the god Chumden-De. This is always the first god that a pupil learns to draw; not because it is considered particularly easy, but because it was the first to be incarnated. His drawing of Chumden-De was coloured, but there is no formal instruction in painting, since it consists in merely filling in spaces with solid colour, no attempt being made to suggest the play of light and shade. During the early stage he was never allowed to draw without a copy, but by the time he finished he had made so many drawings of the various members of the Lamaist pantheon that he was able to draw them from memory without a mistake. His course finished with the painting of a picture known as Jimbong-Ngernga, a complicated group of twenty-five gods, one of which had no less than sixteen hands and legs, not to mention its eight ungainly heads. This, he said, was very difficult, and he has now forgotten how to draw it. During his nine years at Phensang the Hlaribu learnt the details of several hundred gods: he can no longer remember all of these, but by reference to a book is still able to produce any particular one for which he may be asked. He might almost be described as an "Academician" in outlook; for he does not believe in introducing any sort of individuality into his pictures, and thinks it best to stick to the rules. He does not admit the possibility of difference in two pictures of the same subject if painted by two different artists: since the subject is the same one cannot be better than the other. He thinks, however, that paintings made in Tibet are better than those from Sikkim, since the tradition came originally from the former country. In Tibet it is usual for an artist to devote his whole life to the craft, whereas here in Sikkim it is merely a side line. In addition to making pictures the Hlaribu was also taught to do wood-carving, but not to make images, which are usually imported from either Tibet or Bhutan. Carving is almost entirely confined to decorating the mouldings of windows and doors. This is afterwards picked out in colour, usually in a combination of red, blue, and green. The colours are generally crude and violently contrasted,

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but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

* * * * *

I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun, and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

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instead of turning eventually into a god it transformed itself into an emanation of Subdok Mung, and as such has been troubling the Mandal ever since. The local Mun and Lamas have held a consultation, as a result of which it has been decided that certain ceremonies are necessary; but these will not be efficacious unless carried out by a particular Mun who lives in Gyatong. The Mandal sent three times for this man, but he always refused to come; and it was only after being offered a substantial present of *chi* that he at last consented to attend. We were invited to witness the ceremony. When we arrived most of the family was collected in the kitchen, where the old Mun was seated with the usual offerings in front of him; there were several heaps of grain, lumps of butter, and one or two lighted lamps, the whole arranged on a cloth and placed on top of a winnowing-fan. By his side was a bowl of *chi*, out of which he dipped with a piece of banana leaf while making his incantations. He started by asking the demons to accept what he was giving them and finished by asking the gods in general to bless the Mandal, and implored them particularly to give him a son. The actual words he used were somewhat more Rabelaisian than my bald description suggests, and caused much laughter. After about a quarter of an hour the "specialist" handed over to the local Mun, when the offering was taken outside the house and placed on top of a fence. Nearby was a tethered ox, which was later killed with a bow and arrow by Gongyop's son. This beast was being offered to the Subdok Mung as a substitute for the Mandal's life. We always enjoyed attending these ceremonies; for apart from their inherent interest we were invariably offered a portion of the sacrifice, a most welcome addition to our otherwise unvaried diet of stringy chicken.

The Mandal's house is equalled only by that of Tafoor, and has a very fine and elaborate altar-room, complete with gilded images, and the twelve volumes of the *Boom*, the shortened version of the Kangyur. Although the Mandal is not himself a Lama it is usual for all who can afford to do so

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159 to have an altar-room, and also a set of books, to read which
342 Lamas are called in as necessary. I noticed that by means of
622 bamboo conduits water was made available inside the house,
[312 where it dripped into a huge copper vessel. This was the only
336] house in Lingtem which might be described as having "running water."

159 The Mandal was an only child, and when his father had
587 already handed over most of his work, he adopted another boy in order to have someone to work the fields. On the death of his father the Mandal handed his wife, of whom he was growing tired, over to this adopted brother; and then married again. The first wife died shortly after, whereupon the Mandal gave his brother the second; and himself married a third. The second wife, who died four years ago, did not care for this arrangement and soon returned to her own home, whereupon the adopted brother was presented with wife number three; and the Mandal married yet again.
[585] Since he and his brother were living in the same house no ceremony was performed when these cast-off women were handed on; but this would have been necessary had the two brothers been living in separate houses. The Mandal has an only daughter, and passionately desires to have a son. It is this, he says, that has led him into matrimony time after
[789] time; and he has not finished yet! The people saw he will never have a son, since in the time of his father a curse was laid on the family. This was done by an evil-minded Lama, who thought that if there were any more children they would claim the land adjacent to their house. This was the property of some people who had died without heirs, and it had not at that time been reallotted.

159 It is generally believed that the Mandal is not the son of his
[848] supposed father, who was impotent. Once, when the father was absent from home, his mother, anxious lest the family die out altogether, induced a certain man to come and visit her
159 daughter-in-law. The story is known to the whole of the
837 village, and is said to have been made public by Chala's own biological father. He appears to have been a man of

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

outstanding physique; for Chala's mother, when she was an old woman, later told her son that she was terrified at their first encounter. He seems also to have been noted for his promiscuity, a trait which Chala has himself inherited.

In addition to his official duties the Mandal gives much thought to the arrangement of local marriages. He has been doing this for so many years that he has now come to think of young people principally in terms of their suitability as possible marriage partners. He has so far acted as go-between for no less than sixty couples, and nowadays nobody ever thinks of asking anyone else to undertake this duty. In these cases he is called in not as village headman, but merely as an experienced member of the community whose opinion is trusted. His duties as Mandal, however, take him frequently to all the surrounding villages, and since he is on intimate terms with everybody, he is always in a position to make suggestions. Many marriages are of course settled by the families or individuals concerned; but even in cases such as these certain formal arrangements are later thought to be necessary. The ordinary man does not know the correct form of speech proper to such occasions, and for this reason the Mandal's services are still in much demand.

The Mandal's knowledge of his district is encyclopædic, and although he can neither read nor write he is able to quote without hesitation or mistake details of local administration which one would normally expect to find only in a book of statistics. He is slightly ashamed of being illiterate, but does not realise that his memory is quite extraordinary. He never smokes, and drinks less than others because he has to remember everything "in his heart and belly," as the saying is, and might otherwise forget. Because he was ill and lived a long way away we did not see a great deal of him, but on the few occasions when he came to the monastery his great delight was to sit on a chair. The only ones we had were of the camp variety; and having been with me all over the Himalayas were in the last stages of disrepair, and liable to fall to pieces at any moment. To the

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159 622 Mandal, however, they represented the height of comfort, and he begged me to give him one as a parting gift. This I did; and the last view I had of him was as he disappeared into the forest, with the chair perched precariously on his head.

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602 Although extremely laborious it would be possible to show, by means of charts, the connection between the various people of Lingtem. Nearly everybody is related, either by blood or marriage, to everyone else. In a general account such as this, however, these details would not make for easy reading, and I propose therefore to reserve them for publication in some appropriate scientific journal.